South River Watershed Restoration
Environmental Assessment
South River Field Office
EA # OR-105-00-05

Date Prepared: July 31, 2000

West Fork Canyon Creek Road Decommissioning and In-Stream Restoration Decision Record

Decision: It is my decision to authorize the decommissioning of approximately 2.5 miles of road, and the placement of approximately ten (10) log structures in a ¼ mile reach of an unnamed tributary to the West Fork of Canyon Creek. These restoration projects are located in Section 10 of T. 31 S., R. 5 W., W.M.

Road decommissioning will consist of the removal of culverts, pull-back of fill material, ditchline obliteration, subgrade outsloping and subsoiling. After decommissioning, roads would be blocked to traffic and seeded with native grasses. Road decommissioning activities will be seasonally restricted to the period between May 15 and October 15. The following roads or road segments will be decommissioned:

- 31-5-10.0 1.46 miles
- 31-5-10.1 Seg. B 0.39 miles
- Spur #1 0.30 miles
- Spur #2 0.20 miles

An absorbent petroleum containment boom will be installed in the creek prior to any placement of log structures. Logs placed in-stream for structure will be yarded into position. There will be no in-stream equipment operation. No equipment will be allowed closer than twenty (20) feet from live water. Temporary equipment access roads will be recontoured and seeded with native grasses after use. The logs will be provided from felled and windthrown timber decked in conjunction with slide repairs along Oregon State Highway 42 in Section 9 of T. 29 S., R. 8 W., W.M.. In-stream construction activities will be restricted to the period between July 1 and September 15, during low summer stream flows, consistent with conditions of the General Authorization of the Oregon Division of State Lands.

All construction equipment will be washed prior to move-in to prevent the introduction of any noxious weeds onto the project site.

There will be no in-stream work conducted along the first 550 feet of stream channel paralleling Spur #1 where surveys have located sites occupied by the Survey and Manage mollusk species

Helminthoglypta hertleini. No other botanical or wildlife Survey and Manage species were identified in the project area, and the results of surveys for Special Status plant species were negative.

Rush skeletonweed was identified along portions of Spur #1. This weed will be manually removed prior to in-stream work and road decommissioning.

Rationale for the Decision:

The decommissioning of roads and the placement of in-stream structures would not result in any undue environmental degradation. Road decommissioning and placement of in-stream structures are consistent with watershed restoration objectives contained in Management Actions/Direction in the ROD/RMP (p. 20) The project is consistent with objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy contained in the *Roseburg District Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP, pp. 20-21), specifically the maintenance and restoration of the sediment regime; maintenance and restoration of in-stream flows; and maintenance and restoration of habitat. The actions would also meet objectives found in Appendix D of the ROD/RMP (p. 138 and 140) "To prevent erosion and sedimentation of streams from unmentioned roads, and restore site productivity to roads no longer needed." and "To mitigate and minimize damage to riparian vegetation, streambanks and stream channels." The implementation of this project analyzed under Alternative 1, the proposed action, of the environmental assessment would meet the stated objectives. Alternative 2, the no action alternative would not meet these objectives.

The BLM consulted with the National Marine Fisheries Service on the proposed action, and a determination of "may affect, likely to adversely affect", but ". . . not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of OC coho salmon or OC steeled." was received in a Biological Opinion, dated July 19, 2000. The effects of the road decommissioning and in-stream work on sediment would be short-term and localized in nature. In their "Incidental Take Statement" contained in the biological opinion, the National Marine Fisheries Service noted that incidental take associated with the proposed actions is expected to be ". . . minimal or non-existent."

No issues were identified by other State or Federal agencies, or by any tribal governments. The Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact were made available for public review from June 28, 2000, through July 28, 2000. Comments were received from one organization. None of the comments constituted new information or issues not already considered in the Environmental Assessment and the ROD/RMP to which it is tiered. The BLM response to the comments and concerns raised follows:

1. A concern was raised as to whether or not the BLM had compared and contrasted the objectives of road decommissioning with the objectives of timber management.

   The Management Actions/Direction for Watershed Restoration (ROD/RMP, p. 21) state that efforts should "Focus watershed restoration on removing some roads and, where needed, upgrade those that remain in the system." Transportation Management Objectives have identified the roads proposed for decommissioning as unnecessary for present management needs. In Section 10, T. 31 S., R. 5 W., the areas accessed by roads

proposed for decommissioning are not anticipated to become available for any timber harvest for a minimum of 50 years. Future access needs could be met by reopening the decommissioned roads or by the construction of either temporary or permanent roads designed to provide the necessary access needs identified at that time.

2. An explanation was requested on the rationale for equating Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife ratings of "fair" and "poor" to the "at risk" and "not properly functioning" determinations made in National Marine Fisheries Service Matrices of Pathways and Indicators (MPI).

   The MPI was developed by the National Marine Fisheries Service in collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The MPI evaluates sets of environmental elements or indicators relative to aquatic, riparian and watershed conditions. These conditions are generally categorized as "properly functioning", "at risk", or "not properly functioning".

   Stream and aquatic habitat inventory data has been collected by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife since 1993, and represents the most current and reliable information on aquatic and riparian conditions. This information is frequently used in describing and analyzing the anticipated effects of a proposed project on the current aquatic and riparian conditions. In order to make this information more usable to cooperating Federal and State agencies, a task force of fisheries biologists from the Umpqua Basin was assembled to develop a benchmark rating system known as the Habitat Benchmark matrix. This matrix was used to correlate the information obtained from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife stream inventories and habitat surveys with the National Marine Fisheries Service MPI. This correlation resulted in the equation of "excellent" and "good" ratings with "properly functioning", "fair" ratings with "at risk", and "poor" ratings with "not properly functioning". This correlation is only considered applicable to projects in the Umpqua River sub-basin.

Compliance and Monitoring:
Monitoring will be done in accordance with implementation monitoring objectives and requirements for Riparian Reserves, Water and Soils, Wildlife Habitat, Fish Habitat, and Special Status and SEIS Special Attention Species Habitat resources contained in the ROD/RMP, Appendix I (190-191, and 195-199).

Protest and Appeals Procedures: As outlined in 43 CAR § 5003 - Administrative Remedies, protests may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the publication date of the Decision Notice in the News Review.

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E. Dwight Fielder Date
Field Manager
South River Field Office